
The *Catalyst*



**The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks
Spring/Summer 2006**

Volume 8 No. 1

*Environmental Living
and
Environmental Studies Programs*



**Student "soldiers" at-ease at the Fort Tejon barracks.
Photo by Dorothy Picking, 4th Grade Teacher,
Stockdale Christian School, Bakersfield, CA**

Connecting Children to the Past



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Contributor's Guidelines

The Catalyst welcomes your original articles up to two pages in length. We prefer unpublished material, but will occasionally reprint items published elsewhere. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time. Please include a photo whenever possible.

Future guest editors and focuses will be:

Fall 2006: Accessibility

Deadline: August 31

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Winter 2006/2007: Docent Training

Deadline: November 30

Guest Editor: Nikki Combs

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We really appreciate items submitted on disk or by e-mail. Check with the guest editor for preferred file formats. Please send photos as separate files, not inserted into your document. You may also submit original photos or other illustrations to *The Catalyst*. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly. We reserve the right to edit all material. Items are selected for publication solely at the discretion of the editor and publisher. We appreciate your suggestions.

 YOUR Name Could Be HERE!

If you would like to guest-edit a future issue of *The Catalyst* on a topic of your choosing, contact Donna Pozzi at (916) 653-4643, or DPOZZ@parks.ca.gov.

From the Editor

Welcome to the first of at least three focused-topic issues of *The Catalyst*. (That's *topic*, not *them*!) The next issue, to be edited by Pat Turse, will focus on accessibility. Nicki Combs will be at the helm for the following issue, and the topic will be docent training.

As you've already seen from the cover, this issue is on Environmental Living Programs (ELPs) and Environmental Studies Programs (ESPs). I'm currently working on the planning for future ELPs and ESPs at Wilder Ranch State Park, so this issue's topic was a natural—and a great way to get to talk to and correspond with some VERRRY interesting and knowledgeable people.

Some of you may be thinking, "What the heck are ELPs and ESPs?" Or, you may assume that because the names contain the e-word, they're Environmental Education programs.

What IS an Environmental Living or Environmental Studies Program? I'll give you two hints: it's a cultural history program, and it does NOT involve talking AT children, like I'm doing in the picture above. (For you costumers, don't worry: I now have antique gold spectacle frames fitted with my prescription, and don't wear the horrors I'm wearing in the picture.) For a brief overview of what an ELP or ESP is, see page 6. It's followed by a table summarizing current State Parks ELPs, on page 7.

What horrible fate could befall a child who participates in an ELP? Sara Skinner provides one answer to that question from personal experience, on page 8.



My sister Kassy Fatooh and I managed to collar retired State Parks historian Glenn Burch before he sailed off to ports unknown, and interview him about the beginnings of ELPs in state parks. Kassy, who worked with Glenn when she was a PIS in Sonoma and Petaluma, wrote up a summary of the interview. Read the results starting on page 10.

Want to find out a little about what it's like to set up and run an ELP? Sean Malis can give you the inside scoop, straight from Fort Tejon to page 14.

Sarah Gould and Robin Joy describe the joys and value of an ELP, in their case the Fort Ross program, for students, teachers, parents, and, yes, park staff. Robin and Sarah's article is on page 16.

And finally, enough from the interpreters' (and child interpreter's) perspectives. What about the teachers? On page 18, you'll get the educator's eye view in an interview with Cindy Tucker. Cindy, now head of Curriculum Development for the Elk Grove School District, worked with Glenn Burch to develop the ELPs at Tomales Bay, Fort Ross, and Petaluma Adobe.

The usual Interpreters' Resources, Master Interpreter, and California's Tapestry are in their usual places, on pp. 4 and 5 and the inside back cover, respectively.

I hope that, even if you have absolutely no interest in ELPs or even history, you'll glean a new perspective on what can be done with school programs (and park programs in general) from glancing through this issue.

Enjoy, and until Pat's issue in the fall, happy Spring/Summer 2006!

Carolyn Schimandle
Guest Editor
Park Interpreter I
Wilder Ranch State Park

What's Up?



Interpreters' Resources

It's not too early to start planning for upcoming conferences and workshops:

North American Association for Environmental Education 35th Annual Conference

Gathering at the Headwaters: Building EE in Society

St. Paul, Minnesota
October 10-14, 2006
naaee.org/pages/conferences/



California Council for the Promotion of History 2006 Conference

From Adobe Bricks to Adobe® Bytes: Historical Transformations in California

San Jose, California
October 26-28, 2006
www.csus.edu/org/ccph/Conference/

The National Association for Interpretation 2006 National Interpreters Workshop

Sharing Stories Along the Way



Albuquerque, New Mexico

November 7 - 11, 2006

Keynote speaker: Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods,"

www.interpnet.com/niw2006/

CSPRA (California State Parks Rangers' Association) Conference '07

Yosemite
March 4-8, 2007.
Features three days of training sessions, including a dedicated interpretive track.



Consider being a conference presenter—

Sep. 1: Call for presenters.

Nov. 1: Deadline for submission of proposals.

Dec. 1: Final announcement of interpretation presenters.

Conference volunteer opportunities that provide free admission to sessions are also available.

www.cspra.com.

Training scholarships offered by CSPRA

Members may receive up to \$300 to attend training, such as that offered by NAI, or others. In return, recipients write an article about the training for the CSPRA newsletter, *The Wave*.

Scholarship benefits outweigh the membership dues. And NEW this year: seasonals are now eligible to join CSPRA! The CSPRA conference and the scholarships provide excellent training opportunities for seasonals, who have little or no opportunity to attend State Parks training.

www.cspra.com.

Mini Tripod

From Brian Cahill:

"If you are like most interpreters, you probably know a tripod would improve much of your photography. But still most of us fail to bring one along most of the time. Perhaps you need the "Gorillapod"? It is small enough that you might just have it handy when you

need it. It is incredibly versatile and costs less than eighteen bucks.

"Check it out at www.cyberguys.com. Be sure to check out the detail images showing how it can be used."

Downloadable ELP Forms

Steve Beck passed on the following tip that has worked well for the Sutter's Fort ELP. "An overview and application for the Sutter's Fort ELP may be downloaded from the Fort's webpage on www.parks.ca.gov. This made it much easier for teachers and me. It also significantly reduced mailing expenses and staff time involved with mailing."

On-line Nature Discussion Forum

Build a worldwide community of nature enthusiasts and educators by sharing knowledge, resources, ideas and inspirations. The NatureTalk site hosts discussion forums on nature-based mentoring, birding, mammal studies, edible and medicinal plants, animal tracking, primitive skills, nature awareness, and more.
<http://naturetalk.net/>

Dear Master Interpreter

Dear Master Interpreter,

Help! We are being cut brutally (again!). How are we ever going to be able to operate without our Seasonal Interpretive Specialist?

Worried

Dear Worried,

Sure, times are tough but don't give up yet. We have seen times like this before. Take another look at your cooperating association or maybe even consider fee-based interpretation. Eventually we'll get into a better political cycle and now is a great time to position your park for that day. Update your Park Infrastructure Database (PID) and get your interpretive program documented in CAMP. With the Department's updated strategic initiatives many of us are looking forward to a renewed emphasis on interpretation. Be patient a little longer. Remember the words of Eleanor Roosevelt, "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

Where do I start if I want to create a really great interpretive Powerpoint Presentation?

Powerpoint Pam

Dear Pam,

You can start by not calling it a "powerpoint presentation."



After all, we never spoke of doing an Ektagraphic talk. I even disliked the term "slideshow" as too trite for a real interpretive program. Is there any reason to draw attention to the mechanics of how you illustrate your talk? It even carries a somewhat negative connotation. To many people "powerpoint presentation" means a series of bulleted lists, and hopefully that's not what you are presenting. Can't we just all agree not to use that phrase and say we'll be doing an interpretive presentation?

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

How come PORTS is still operating in only a couple parks? Aren't there several employees working on it full-time? My superintendent is after me to get it going here. Where do I start?

Anxious

Dear Anxious,

Nearly 12,000 school children participated in PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students) programs presented out of four state parks this school year. While it may not be completely visible to you, the PORTS team is hard at work building relationships with school districts and technology contacts throughout the state. A lot of issues have been resolved this year that will facilitate taking it to the next level.

You can start by calling Joe von Herrmann at (916) 947-8073, or emailing him at jvonh@parks.ca.gov. Start

looking for funding now. (About \$50,000 would be a real good start.) PORTS funding could fit readily into a lot of grant programs. If you can secure funding outside of normal channels you will be ready to hit the ground running. But, remember, obtaining the equipment is only one aspect of a PORTS program. Developing and maintaining the full unit of study and the on-line presence are expensive and large tasks. Funding the interpreters for the ongoing presentations is a long-term district commitment.

MI

Dear Master Interpreter,

We used to make a clear distinction between interpretation and education. But lately I am hearing the words joined together and sometimes used interchangeably. Is it no longer important to make that distinction?

Interpreter (or is that educator?)

Dear Interpreter,

I believe that distinction is more important than ever. It is our responsibility as interpreters to educate those who do not understand the difference. It is very basic, coming right out of the first chapter in Sam Ham's book. Education deals with a captive audience motivated by an external reward. Interpretation deals with a non-captive audience motivated by internal rewards. Interpretation is what we do best.

MI

What IS an ELP (or ESP)?

Carolyn Schimandle
Guest Editor

Since 1969, children have been connecting with people of the past through Environmental Living Programs at national and state parks throughout the United States. Bill Taylor, an interpretive specialist with the NPS who originated the programs, was one of Donna Pozzi's interpretation instructors at UC Davis in the early '70s. Her class helped Bill compile the 1975 National Parks set of booklets, *Environmental Living Program*. Donna says of the original ELP concept: "This program creatively integrated history and ecology (called cultural ecology) in its original design." Here is the description of an ELP from the NPS booklets:

Environmental living, as the name implies, is an actual living, overnight experience for children that takes place at any cultural, historic, or prehistoric site where the interaction and interdependency of man and his environment are presented.

The basic concept of the program is survival. Looking into the past, students gather information on how a particular culture survived in the area where they live now. They use this information to prepare for their own survival for a day, recreating that culture or era they have studied. Through roles they have chosen to play, the students relate the past to themselves in the present. And, finally, through their complete involvement in the roles and activities, they consider what

might be here tomorrow.

Teachers prepare to help their students plan the live-in by attending a planning workshop. These workshops are generally arranged by an historic site or park and planned in consultation with teachers who have tried the program in their classrooms. The workshops closely parallel the live-in experience being proposed for the students. The emphasis is on experiencing as well as planning and discussing what needs to be organized for the classes.

The Environmental Living Program is appropriate to all grade levels and content areas. The key to success is preparation. All subject areas and grade levels research such questions as: Who lived here? What supplies did they need and where did they get them? Who was in charge and what laws were essential for survival? and What needed to be cared for and who did the caring? These questions form the basic task groups necessary for survival: food, supplies, order and maintenance.

Through library research, guest speakers, field trips, movies and other classroom preparation, the students not only learn the facts they need to plan their program, they develop and refine basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. The live-in is actually the culmination of the total learning experience, the performance of all the preparation.

What is an Environmental Studies Program? An Environmental Studies Program, or ESP, is an extended day program; it is essentially an ELP without the overnight.

Is an ELP or ESP just a set of craft and activity stations? It can—and usually does—involve hands-on activities appropriate to the time and place, but it is much more than that. It is an experience of living at the same place, eating the same food, doing the same types of daily work and play that the residents in the focus time-period did. The extensive pre-trip preparation and the child-led structure add a unique and valuable element to the programs.

Essentially, the ELP helps the children see in 4-D: the dimension of time is added to their view of the world around them. It also helps them understand themselves and their place in the world of the present.

Summary of Active State Park Environmental Living Programs (as of May, 2006)

Park	Contact/Program Website	Time period and topic
Angel Island	Michelle Armijo aielp@parks.ca.gov (415) 435-5390 voicemail #2 www.angelisland.org/calendar/living history.htm	1864. Soldiers' life at Fort Reynolds
Fort Ross	Robin Joy frrobin@mcn.org (707) 847-4777 www.fortrossstatepark.org	1812-1841. Daily life at Fort Ross and the Russian American Company.
Fort Tejon	Sean Malis smalis@parks.ca.gov (661) 248-7001 www.forttejon.org/progen.html	1850s. "Everyday life at this mountain outpost of the U.S. Army."
Indian Grinding Rock	Visitor Center (209) 296-7488 No coordinator. Teachers use manual available at Visitor Center, and reserve group campsite with bark houses via Reserve America	Pre-European settlement Sierra Miwok life.
Petaluma Adobe	Sara Skinner adobesara@hotmail.com or sskinner@parks.ca.gov Crystal Shoaf cshoaf@parks.ca.gov (707) 762-4871	1836-1846 life at the Petaluma <i>Rancho</i> .
Tomaes Bay	Chris Platis cplatis@parks.ca.gov (415) 669-1140	Pre-European settlement Coast Miwok culture.
Sutter's Fort	Steve Beck stbeck@parks.ca.gov or elp@parks.ca.gov (916) 323-8112	1840s life at Sutter's Fort.

Reporting for Duty

By Sara M. Skinner
Guide I, Historical
Monument
Petaluma Adobe State
Historic Park
Silverado Sector, Diablo
Vista District
Photos by Martha Skinner

"P.F.C. Skinner reporting for duty, SIR," I said as I stood at the end of the dock on September 30, 1987, at 0945. I, along with my sixth grade class from Hidden Valley Elementary School, was about to embark on an overnight experience as Civil War soldiers stationed on this island in the cold San Francisco Bay. My mother was along as a sergeant. Were we ready for this? I remember that we had tried various daypacks from friends who were hikers before each of us found one that would work without toppling us over backwards. The trek to the barracks filled us with anticipation, nervousness, excitement (besides, I had a crush on one of the guys in my squad). Squad 1 was responsible for unloading all of the supplies at Camp Reynolds after our half hour march there from the dock. We were ready to continue our ELP experience on Angel Island State Park.

The day and night were long and filled with activity. We learned how to do Morse Code with flags, "orienteer" (during a hike), had a kitchen shift (preparation of dinner), a



Sara's class reports to Angel Island

military drill, and manual arms training. The night hike to the top of Mt. Livermore was the highlight of the trip. According to my journal, "The lights were shining all over the bay; The Golden Gate Bridge looked beautiful. The funniest moment was when a baby raccoon

sneaked into the mess hall during our night watch shift between 2400 and 0200." I recall two other highlights: one was when a shark washed up on the shore and we were granted five minutes of leave time to view the animal (it smelled);



Mail Call

another was mail call. Mail call was a surprise to all of us; our teacher was able to have a family member write us letters that she brought to the island. My father, as creative as he is, wrote a letter using facts from the time period. I remember crying as I received it, even though Mom was along as a sergeant (we weren't supposed to view them as "parents").

How do you like army life? We hope that being in California will keep you away from those nightmare conditions south of the Mason-Dixon Line...we must ask you something. Have you seen your mother? Your mother was really upset when you joined the army. She used to walk around the house, crying. One day last week she left us a note, saying she was going to go looking for you. I know that's silly, but, if you see her, tell her we love her and want her home...We hope you're not learning any bad habits. Remember to say your prayers and not to swear, chew tobacco, or drink too much beer...We hope you do not have to go to Mexico to fight Archduke Maximilian...love to you always, sincerely, your lonely father.

The trip to Angel Island, coupled with my junior ranger discoveries in third and fourth grade, led me to a career with California State Parks. My co-worker, Ranger Crystal Shoaf, and I run the Environmental Living Program at Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park. Almost twenty years later, I now see the excitement on the faces of the school children as they embark on a journey to 1840 on a Rancho in Alta California. Our program has many differences from the activities of Angel Island, but the overall goals remain the same: enlightenment, influence, and self-learning. I don't believe that reading about an event in history or a time period in a book can compare to the "living" that our ELP and ESPs require a class to do.

The program can only be as good as the staff dedicated to it and the desire of the teachers to make it an exceptional experience for their students. We often see an array of interest in the program and our groups range from those in entire costume/character roles to those that are just here to learn the crafts. The best teachers are those who make the effort to have everyone in character and costumes, and do extensive preparation before arrival. I still have my letter written from my father and the manual we all received. My coworker is amused when forty-year-olds return to our park and tell us they still have their candles from their ELP experience. We are assisting to create memories we hope young school children will never forget.



Sara Skinner today, at the Petaluma Adobe

The Roots of ELPs in State Parks: an Interview with Glenn Burch

By Kassy Fatooh
Former Park Interpretive
Specialist
Silverado Sector, Diablo
Vista District

Interview conducted by
Kassy Fatooh and Carolyn
Schimandle

Did you shoot the breeze and the black powder with him at Rendezvous, or dance with him at a fandango? Perhaps you attended his workshop in period costuming, or he helped you establish an Environmental Living Program at your park. Founding work on ELP programs is one of many contributions in the career of retired State Parks Historian Glenn Burch. Recently, we interviewed him at the Petaluma Adobe to learn about the early days of ELPs.

The courtyard was sloppy from a month of near-nonstop rainfall, so we stayed in the shelter of the balcony to talk. Bad as the weather was, and despite mudslides en route, the ELP group of the night before had not canceled. Weather hasn't stopped many ELPs. Burch recalls, "We did the first workshop at Hyde Street and Fort Point. It was so cold, there were icicles hanging from the Golden Gate Bridge."

Burch credits a boyhood of scouting for preparing him, not only for roughing it, but for the whole idea of ELPs. "Scouting was part of my background. So

a lot of what was inherent originally in it, because I'd been in the Boy Scouts and Sea Scouts, was just natural...I never questioned the concept of doing the program. It was just, 'Yeah, that's a great idea! Let's do it!'"

Everything in his early training seems to have led logically to his first ELPs, at Fort Point and aboard the C.A. Thayer, an 1895 schooner at Hyde Street Pier in San Francisco. "I got interested in boats the same way I got interested in history. My dad came home with a sound-powered telephone and a book of naval history. He would sit in the living room with the headset on and I would sit in the bedroom, and he would read naval history to me. Early American naval history was exciting stuff. I was probably about eight or nine."

"When I was 15, I went into a Sea Scout ship in Fairfield and learned to sail.... When I got out of high school....I went to the California Maritime Academy. My first degree was a B.S. in Nautical Science." He followed this with service in the Coast Guard. "Then I was out of the Coast Guard about two years when I went to work at Hyde Street Pier, so I was a professionally trained mariner... I went back to school at City College and then S.F. State, and earned a degree in history."

Working as a historian and exhibit specialist at Hyde



Glenn at the Petaluma Adobe

Street Pier, he was the right person in the right place at the right time when the ELP idea was launched.

"A bunch of teachers were developing this concept at U.C. Berkeley, and that group included a guy named Bill Taylor, with National Parks. He was Environmental Ed specialist for the Western Regional Office...and they came up with what looked like an Environmental Living Program. They tested it out with a group of kids...and let the kids pretty much run with it." Then, "Bill Taylor got state parks involved, in a cooperative program. They were at Fort Point and moved to the C.A. Thayer in the evenings because it was warmer and more comfortable, and had a good working galley." Burch was assigned to the new program from its inception. "I was told to work with them and make the program happen."

"The concept came out of a social studies curriculum that was being developed, called *Man: A Course of Studies*, which never really flew too well. Teachers loved it, it was a good program, but it looked at humans as animals, or in the same context as animals. It was comparing Netsilik Eskimo life, and the life of salmon... herring gulls... a very ecologically structured program, and a lot of people didn't like that. They were upset by the comparison of humans with animals. We're somehow different."

The first ELPs didn't have manuals for the workshops; those were developed later. "The kids decided what they were going to do, and that's what the program came from. Bill never liked the fact that we had the manual and used it every year. He thought that was too structured. Frankly, if I could have done without it I would have. We did it at Hyde Street to start with, and that was the first manual, because we were working with four or five different people running the program. Every week a group would come, we'd have a different ranger...we needed some kind of uniformity. I think the park system and rangers needed more structure than the kids or teachers did.

Burch recalls many glitches in the early days of the ELPs. Some of them, problems with reservations and budgets, appear to be perennial worries. "The first two workshops were combined; one was almost all Marin teachers and the other was all teachers from the East Bay, like Orinda. We got to the

point where, somehow, Orinda had 90% of the programs booked up, and there was another school district that was going to sue them, because they weren't getting any programs. So they were fighting over reservations really early on."

"There was a lot of support [for the ELPs] but one thing Jack Knight said he wouldn't support, is, he didn't want it to turn up as a budget item. It had to be supported by whatever we already had. Well, you know, it's always a problem within the park system: do more with less. He was trying to make things work and keep the budget under control."

Early concerns about insurance were soon cleared up. "Bill Taylor, who originally conceived of [the ELP], took care of that in the federal department. He had a Solicitor General for the National Parks region look at the program and he came up with a few interpretations that made it really easy. For example, schools were responsible for kids from the time they leave home until they get back home; so if they come here the primary liability is with the school, not with the park. That was the first thing he took care of, that it was a cooperative venture, and that cleared up the problem really fast. Opened a lot of doors."

"Like I was saying, Bill and I were working together, frequently.... We got the C.A. Thayer going good, and at some point, Jim Nyder had me come back here and look at this district. They had tried to

start something here. It was for some reason just a day program.... So Jim invited me up [to the Petaluma Adobe] to look at it, and he said, 'Well, what do you think?' I said, 'Why aren't you doing overnights? You've got all the facilities.' We started doing an alternating program: one week we'd do a daytime-only program and the next week we'd do an overnight. We also opened it up to other school districts, which took some pressure off the other program.... The last time I handled reservations, we were getting reservations from as far north as Eureka...we'd see classes from the high Sierras a lot. "

"In the middle of '75 I went on loan to the Western Region of National Parks. My function during that year and a half was just to do workshops in national parks and help them get things going. The folks over at John Muir had started a program...I did training for the park staff and such in Arizona. Fort Bowie started a program. That was a really exciting thing because it was on a bend of the creek and there were three campsites. One was military, and these guys would do the Indian Wars army. They had salt pork and hard tack and coffee beans that needed to be roasted on the fire and then crushed with a rifle barrel. About a mile downstream just around the bend, there was a camp of Sonorans that were coming up out of Mexico, and that was the good food. Another trip around there was a guy named Edgar Perry, who was a White River Apache. He and his wife came down and built a bear grass

wikiup, baked corn in an earth oven, and bought horsemeat steaks. Horsemeat is legitimate in Arizona, or was then, and the Apaches evidently liked it better than they did beef. So we had these three camps, and they all interacted, which was kinda nifty."

"And then it was Tumacácori, which is an old mission site. We did a workshop there, and then I went out to Hawaii and visited, and we talked about it at all the parks out there. We did a workshop down on the Kalapana coast of Hawaii, and that's a whole site that isn't even there anymore. It's been wiped out by the volcano. There was the archaeological remains of an ancient Hawaiian village, and it came right down to the cliff, and, from the cliff on, it had already slumped into the ocean." Burch then returned to State Parks, and helped establish programs at Tomales, Fort Ross, Turlock Lake, Folsom and Sutter's Fort.

The ELP planning book describes the kids themselves designing their own program. Burch says this idea will work, "if the teachers let it." "If you've got a teacher that's willing to back off you can use what the National Parks book talks about; the Strands approach.... The kids can pretty much come up with most of what you're prepared to do anyway. A lot of what we've done, like candlemaking and woodworking, is based partly on the place, partly on what people come up with when you're first working with them. If you use that approach, people will start

asking those questions, and it leads sort of naturally to those places."

"The one in Arizona, the Fort Bowie program, was really cool, because you're talking about three cultures colliding. And at one point...in that vicinity, some ranchers or somebody had gotten raided and killed. The assumption was that it was Cochise and his band. So the army went flying down there...and then, after battles and such, they discover it wasn't Cochise and his Indians at all, it was somebody else. It was white people who'd done this raid and this killing. So when you did this program with the kids, half the time the kids would say, 'Hey, wait a minute! How do we know he did it? Let's find out!' And they wouldn't have a war. Sometimes their solution was better than the history. And that was worth looking into. I mean, if you just do it as a crafts program, that's the kind of thing you don't get.

On the other hand, the crafts program I got here, a little kid, one time—you know, you'd do some carding, spinning and weaving and you'd come out with these pieces of cloth the kids made. Anyway, this one kid standing there comes over and he says, 'Gee, if I had to go through all that to make my clothes, I'd probably take better care of them.' That's a social crafts activity, but the ecological message came through. That's what it's really about, Environmental Studies."

"We were talking about costumes. I remember...I went to a surplus store in Santa Rosa:

I needed a machete to cut tules with in Tomales. This guy had a whole bunch of surplus British firemen's coats.... I saw those, and thought well, that's curious, and I walked a little farther and there was a pair of surplus Marine Corps dress blues hanging on a peg among other uniforms, and all of a sudden it hit me: "Oh, our uniform!" I went back and grabbed the Marine Corps blues, and grabbed one of those coats and, with just that, we're halfway there.... I went back and bought another coat, that had some kind of black braid around the collar, and thought, if I just cut this off at the waist, I get a vaquero jacket! And the next thing you know, with a pair of navy blue trousers, I made my first vaquero costume! I became a costume slut—what can I say?"

Much as he enjoys costuming, Burch cautions against, "holding the kids to a higher standard of costuming than was really necessary. The kids have to do the interpretation to their standards, not to your standards and my standards. That's the way I feel."

To Burch, the proof of the programs' success is in their effect on people's relationships to parks: "It's stuff you hear, some kid that went to a program twenty years ago and they're talking about it now. Most of the people voting for park bonds...the only time they ever come to a park, is when they come with a class for a program like that. You start talking to people, and you keep

hearing this. It's a word of mouth sort of thing."

We kept Burch longer than we meant to. We could have filled a whole newsletter with the anecdotes of early mishaps and struggles in the ELPs. He told us about ideas that worked and didn't, and ideas that have yet to be tried. Some ideas, he'll leave behind for others to work on. He's retired, now, and once he can get out of the marina in Petaluma, he's off for a world cruise. "They say that cruising is repairing your boat in exotic ports," he quotes, but the rough times don't bother him. As he said about the ELPs, "I liked it so much I used to spend one night a week with a class, here at the Petaluma Adobe, at Fort Ross, and at Tomales Bay. Most go smoothly. Even if they're a little ragged around the edges, they're smooth. The things that don't go smooth, you learn from."

A final piece of advice he left us with, counseled taking risks. If you're wondering what you can get away with doing in an ELP at your park, Glenn Burch will tell you, "my favorite totem is a turtle. A turtle doesn't go anywhere unless it's got its neck stuck out. Unless you stick your neck out, you're not going to make any progress."

Environmental Living Program Booklets

This boxed set of booklets was published by NPS in 1975. It is now out of print. In many park libraries you should still be able to find the set of 4 booklets and a poster. They originally were packaged in a gold-colored box, approximately 10"x 10" x 1" that says "Environmental Living Program" on the spine. Donna Pozzi says, "These lay out the philosophy of ELPs rather than being a nuts and bolts guide. For someone starting a new program, it would be good to fully understand the roots and goals of the program. If you work with an ELP and are unfamiliar with the founding philosophy, they are worth checking out to understand more of the *why* behind ELPs. It's beautiful for its simplicity and it's probably all still relevant today."

The Strands Walk

The Strands Walk booklet is also out of print, but is worth tracking down. The Strands Walk is essentially a set of guided explorations to help children connect to an environment. If you can't find a copy locally, contact me (Carolyn Schimandle; contact info on p. 3) and I will make you a copy. (Since it's a government publication, it is copyright-free.)



A Case Study: Fort Tejon's ELP

By Sean T. Malis
State Park Interpreter I
Fort Tejon State Historic
Park
Central Valley District

Fort Tejon is a State Historic Park in southern Kern County. It is located right in the Grapevine on Interstate 5 about an hour and a half north of Los Angeles.

Exactly 150 years ago Fort Tejon was a bustling US Army post with hundreds of soldiers stationed at the mountain fort. Officers and men established households and raised families while serving their country. Amid the sounds of bugles and soldiers barking orders, there could also be found the sounds and sights of children playing—the true “Army Brats”

Today, the sounds and sights of children fill the air of Fort Tejon once again. For today, every year, Fort Tejon hosts approximately 1200 children, parents and teachers taking a step back in time to the 1850s in early California history.

For the last ten years Fort Tejon has offered what it calls the Student Living History Program, an Environmental Living Program (ELP). Staff decided to call their ELP program a Living History program because of the cultural history focus of the park, as opposed to an “Environmental Studies Program.”

The history of Fort Tejon's SLHP, or ELP, is a study of the development and growth of an Environmental Living program. The ELP at Fort Tejon started small with no personnel or logistical support. It has grown into a program catering to more than a thousand students per year, along with dedicated support staff and infrastructure.

In 1988, former Fort Tejon Superintendent Bill Berry and the park's cooperating association, the Fort Tejon Historical Association, created an ELP for the local elementary school. From 1988 to 1996 usually three 4th grade classes a year from the local school would come to Fort Tejon and experience some of the activities that were once commonplace at the Fort in the 1850s. The entire cost of the program was borne by the co-op association, and it was staffed by its volunteers. Park staff was minimally involved.

In 1996 a big change in the ELP began as the park underwent changes in staff and superintendents. Park personnel took responsibility for the ELP and created an entirely new program. The new program could now be offered to all schools, was supported by personnel dedicated to the program, and with facilities and equipment for the program.

This change did cause some friction within the co-op association; however, the association has continued to make substantial contributions in the form of equipment and supplies. The change was big. Staff was charged with creating a system that could accept any school within the area, and provide prepared meals, program materials and equipment, facilities, dedicated staff, accounting, marketing of the program, training, program literature, and evaluation of the program.

The new program offered mostly 4th and 5th grade school children a chance to participate in laundering, candle making, blacksmithing, carpentry, cooking, and adobe brick making. Park staff has added cannon firing, soap making, gardening, period games and other crafts during the last ten years. Several new structures have been created to house these hands-on demonstrations.

A major work was to develop a teacher's handbook that could prepare the teachers and their classes for the ELP. Much work and time was spent developing the Teacher's Handbook, and, in its many revisions, it serves as the program's “bible.” Staff studied other ELP programs, and sought help for the development of the program. Fort Tejon owes much to Robin Joy Wellman at Fort Ross SHP for her invaluable assistance in the creation of the Teacher's Handbook.

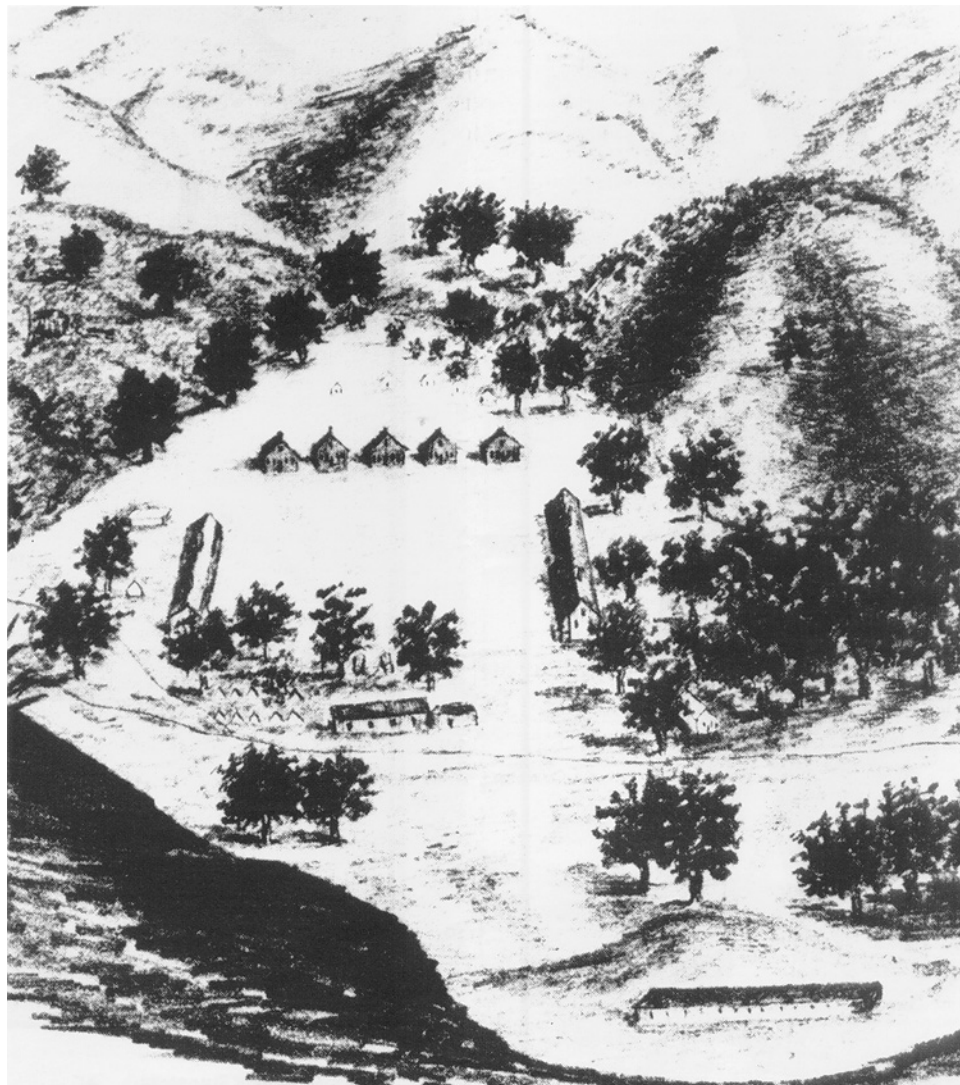
As more and more schools started coming to Fort Tejon, more staff was needed. An account was created to hire park aides to help man the program. All program fees and donations are deposited to the state account. Program materials and equipment are paid for from this account, as well as the wages of the park aides.

Today, the program is entirely supported by the fees paid by the students and their schools. Currently, children are

charged \$25.00 each to participate. All food, materials and staff are included for this price. The program begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 10:30 a.m. the next day.

Twenty-four classes are participating this year at Fort Tejon. In fact, the Fort is in the middle of its busiest season even as this is being written. Due to the increase in demand, a fall season is being planned to accommodate the popularity of Fort Tejon's ELP.

In the last eighteen years, Fort Tejon's ELP has grown from just three classes to 24. Staff has been added to support the program and new facilities have grown with the program. During these large programs, with children and adults dressed as soldiers and civilians of the 1850s, it sometimes seems as if the sights and sounds of the original Fort Tejon have come back to life.



**Earliest known sketch of Fort Tejon.
Drawn by Captain Edward Townsend, October, 1855.**

Life at Colony Ross

Robin Joy
**Park Interpretive Specialist-
 Seasonal**
Sarah Gould
Senior Park Aid
Fort Ross State Historic Park

It is hard to know where to begin when we highlight the Environmental Living Programs (ELPs) of California State Parks. At Fort Ross State Historic Park, our ELP has been ongoing for the last 25 years or so. Sarah Gould and Robin Joy have been involved for a combined 31 years. We have two programs each week the entire school year. We generally host over 70 programs with an average of 2500 students each school year. Our groups come from as far as Arcata in the north and as far south as the Bay Area, as well as schools from the Sierras.

But these are just statistics—only relevant if you count numbers and find this meaningful. It is not possible to measure what counts most, and that is the personal experience for each teacher, parent, and student who is a part of this adventure. The special moments are only measured as students and parents alike bring ideas, share feelings, and complete the many hands-on tasks of the ELP.

The California State Park Mission Statement, *"To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating*

opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation," embraces all aspects of the program. The planning and curriculum development, the personal contact with teachers, and most significantly the benefits to the students and parents who are enriched by this two-day experience are what makes this program integral to fulfilling the State Parks mission.

The ELP provides for the health and inspiration for these students and parents in an amazing way. The mental health, the emotional health, and even the physical health are alive. The program begins before they even reach the park. It begins as they start discussing the program in class and at home. It begins with the student imagining what the park is going to look like. What if it is pouring rain—will we make it, and can we survive? What will I wear for my costume? How will it look? Is it correct? How do I say this name of this long-ago immigrant who I have just become? What were these people like? Was this woman or man working so hard they did not notice the beauty around them? What did they do all day? What food did they eat? Where did they sleep? With all these questions begins the inspiration for the teacher, the student and the parent. The adventure becomes very personal. The students gain an understanding of who they are today and their connection to the past.

We have high expectations of teachers who bring students on site. They understand and



accept this. The teachers must come to an overnight training every three years. This brings them on site for a clear picture of the opportunities and experiences that lay ahead for the students and parents. We expect them to know the history of the park. We expect the teacher, students and parents to come in costume, and we expect them all to take on names of actual people who once lived at Colony Ross. They take that name and embrace it in the classroom and on site. When the students embrace the name of an actual person who lived here, they not only learn about the person they are portraying, they learn about each other and start to get a better sense of the place through the lives of the people. We have chuckled on many occasions when students won't answer the teacher unless called by their Colony Ross name.

We have five different role groups: Cooks, Hunters, Militia, Artisans, and Gardeners. We expect the parents to be involved with the planning and have a clear understanding of their role in these groups before they arrive on site. And because of all these expectations of the teacher, the

student, and the parent, we provide a comprehensive manual which is exceptional. The curriculum is set to California State Content Standards for 4th and 5th grade levels—although 3rd and 6th grade levels certainly benefit as well. The manual is complete with a history geared to their grade level, over fifty classroom ideas for activities, and planning packets for each of the five role groups. The manual and overall program have been a model for several parks. We continue to develop and change the manual and program as we are always looking for ways to better them. This is why we mandate that teachers return to the park for a refresher. The ultimate goal is for the student to receive the best possible experience.

Now that the students and parents have all prepared for the Big Day, they arrive on site and really start to see, feel, become, and embrace this life. It is a lot of work to prepare, but when the teachers and parents arrive they feel a huge success. The students begin to validate their ideas or maybe they even change their views; they realize they are not so different from times past. These moments are experiences they carry with them for a lifetime. How do you measure the words from students who say, "Wow, the moon was so bright," "I had never seen so many stars," "I have never seen the ocean before," or "That seal was so cute, he spoke to me," or "I love our flag—look at it flying," or "I really do like wearing a dress?" We hear comments like, "I don't want to leave," "Could we stay another

night," "This is the best trip ever."

Much to the surprise of most parents, the students and even the parents find they love nightwatch. The night experience—being up in the middle of the night and walking together—brings a sense of wonder. The night time becomes more familiar. They feel closer to nature having for just two days paid attention to the moon, the stars, the sun, the rain, the ocean, and the surroundings around them. When they arrive home they start to pay attention to their next meal or their own bed; or their own warm clothing or being cold reminds them of a warm fire.

Just the other day a group of hunters went to the cove to catch the food for the colony. After a few hours they came back with five fish. The entire Colony stopped what tasks they were completing and came to congratulate the hunters and look in admiration at their catch. The artisans made ready the candle lanterns, while the cooks prepared the evening meal over the fire. The gardeners had collected what food they had found while they were planting historically correct plants in the garden. The entire Colony came together at dinner as each group spoke of their accomplishments that day.

Every week when these smiling faces arrive from the 1/4 mile walk in to the site, they bring with them a sense of joy and belonging. We are thrilled to be a part of this. We are constantly reminded by the parents and the students what a great experience this is. There is fun and laughter.

When they say goodbye it is often heart wrenching. It is as though we knew each other for a lifetime. We all have a better understanding of each other: we have sung together, eaten together, danced together, told stories together. These and the many other moments that we have shared are not soon forgotten, if ever. All of us know something special has happened.

These people are more apt to become park stewards preserving and protecting our parks. When they reach voting age, they are the ones who will vote for park bond measures and other related alliances. In this way we continue to preserve and protect our state's extraordinary diversity. How wonderful! In our opinion, from working with the ELP so many years, it is truly one of the best experiences and opportunities State Parks can offer in providing inspiration and education.



ELPs from an Educator's Viewpoint

An Interview with Cindy Tucker, Director of Curriculum and Professional Learning for the Elk Grove School District

**Interviewed by Carolyn Schimandle
Guest Editor**

How did you get involved with ELPs?

In 1973 I was a first-year teacher, and a colleague and friend, also a 4th grade teacher, received an invitation, to go for a training on ELPs sponsored by Glenn Burch at the Petaluma Adobe. And she said, "This looks like fun." The only way you could do [the ELP] was to come, and be willing to spend the night, and bring parents. You had to have a certain number of parents. And so, having never heard of this in our lives, we said, "Yes! Let's do that!"

So, it was a rainy night, and I had parents there, and they were looking at me and at each other and wondering, "What are we doing, and why are we here?" But that was the beginning. My colleague and I continued to do ELPs every year with Glenn, through all the years that I taught, and some years we did a couple of them. We were involved at the Petaluma Adobe. We did Fort Point—there was one year that we both taught fifth grade so we did the ELP at Fort Point, which was run by the national parks with the same concept. We did Fort Ross. (We helped Glenn put together the trainings for that.) We did the Sonoma Mission (ESP) and we did the Indian beach one out at Tomales Bay. So we were really entrenched in it, and we

really integrated all of our curriculum around what we were doing in history/social science.

You said you worked on the curriculum for the Fort Ross ELP. Didn't you help with the curriculum on others?

Once we got involved with Glenn, it became a process of co-creation. So, even though he had Petaluma done, you know, teachers always go back to the classroom and add things and link it to other content areas and that sort of thing. So all through the years we did it we kept on adding things.

We added a cross-age tutoring component: our 4th graders would set up learning stations at our site and bring in younger kids to teach them about California Indians. And those kids were jazzed by the time they got into our class. And we also had students who were alumni who, when they were 8th graders, were able to come back and help on the field trip with the supervision.

What do you see as the value of the ELPs for the children?

Well, it takes the content and brings it to life. Essentially, if the teachers can see the richness of the content, and stay true to that, it really helps kids because they literally live it. They have to take on the personas. The historical empathy that's part of the framework is something the students have to be able to



Cindy at Colony Ross, in her days as a classroom teacher.

embrace to understand what it was actually like to live in the past. It's from those experiences, which are so different from how we live now, that kids can do the "compare and contrast." What's it like now to be a female, compared to 150 years ago? Being pure to the content is really important, because out of that the kids get to see how life compares. All the big themes come through: the continuity and change, the interdependence, the westward movement, the migration of all living creatures, and what motivates people to go. I mean, it's just all of that—the drama. It's human life. The other beauty of it, for me, was the way you can integrate the other content areas. So our P.E. would be walking the track, and you would figure out a scale: for example, one mile equals a hundred miles. This would tie their P.E. in with what it would be like to have to walk that far. With cooking, it

was dealing with fractions, multiplication and addition. So it was really being able to tie the content areas together and make it all much richer.

We'd tie in the handwriting as well. We'd have them write journals as if they were a person in the past. And that was not only their narrative writing, but it would tell us whether they understood the content. It was a very authentic assessment. You could say, "Put yourself in the role of one of the Russian commandants, and write a letter to Sutter." That would bring in letter writing skills, which are also part of the English/Language Arts standards.

I recently read through the original Environmental Living Program booklets that the National Park Service put out in 1975. I was really surprised at the child-led quality of the ELPs as laid out in those booklets. The kids get together and decide the task groups, and decide the rules and so forth. Did that really work?

Oh, my. You mean kind of student led...? It seems like it did, but that was thirty years ago! It seems like it did, but, you know, all of that takes a lot of teacher direction and teacher planning. But if you structure it and provide the students with clear framework, they can do it. And sometimes it means modeling it: you might have a small group that goes through the decision-making process that's being facilitated by the teacher, as the other students are watching. Then

they can go into their respective groups and do the same thing.

And that was with children as young as fourth or fifth grade?

Yes. By fourth grade they want to have a bigger voice in these kind of decisions, but you have to teach them. Don't just tell them, you have to teach them by modeling.

Did you find that other teachers you worked with were pretty comfortable with the concept of ELPs?

I was fortunate in all my years of doing it that I had colleagues at my grade level who were as interested in it as I. And even when Sheila and I, the teachers who started it, left Sonoma County, it continued. Other people came in and kept it going. It's almost become part of that school's culture. So I think when people see how it can be done, see the impact on students, there's a real desire to maintain that. I think there are more challenges now than when I was doing it, given our current environment and time challenges, and the ability to fund these kind of trips. But the programs are continuing, so people are making it work.

You're still working with teachers, sort of the teacher's teacher. Do you think that it is possible for them to put in the necessary prep. work for an ELP in the classroom these days?

I think if you orchestrate the time and see that it's not, okay,

an hour and a half English/Language Arts, and I have to have a separate hour for History/Social Studies and a separate hour for P.E.; when you see your content areas as being able to be integrated, you can accomplish three things at once. Whereas if you see your content as fragmented and disconnected, it's much more difficult. But, with the push for literacy and the standards-based assessments, there really is a greater emphasis on the content, especially the mathematics and the English/Language Arts. So that is where it becomes a challenge.

Will teachers be more interested in doing the ELPs if we can show that they will be able to fulfill certain content standards by going through the program?

Yes. And if there's any way you can get a couple of teachers to come in and help you frame it—teachers who are using the standards right now, and maybe who are also doing ELPs—that's the best way to communicate that to teachers who haven't done it yet and feel like the time and the number of standards is an obstacle.

Do you feel that the teacher/parent workshop is a really important part of making it a good program?

Oh, yes.

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ELPs from an Educator's Viewpoint, *continued from p. 19*

So written material just wouldn't be the same?

Yes. I think the teachers have to go through the experience themselves in order to adequately teach it to their students.

How do you think your experience with the ELPs influences what you present to teachers you work with now? For example, do you encourage hands-on activities and out-of-classroom experiences?

Yes. Definitely that, and being balanced in the curriculum, making sure that you don't overlook history/social science. It helps me in selecting people who are going to work here. I've got a guy who's working here now who's overseeing our "Teaching American History" grant, and he absolutely gets all this stuff we've been talking about. It influences the way I think about curriculum, the value of authentic experiences like this for kids in helping them really feel connected to the curriculum. Otherwise, people say, "Oh, history is so boring." But history's not boring. History textbooks are boring.

That's how I felt in school. I hated history, but at the same time I loved visiting historic sites. It's that whole thing of making history come alive.

Right. But you've got to be really rigorous and disciplined in doing that. I've also walked into classrooms where there's a lot of activity happening, but it's really not connected to the standards or a solid learning outcome, so it's wasted time. It's really important that the teachers know their curriculum and know their standards, and know how to match the activities they're providing for students with the standards. Activity for the sake of activity is not going to get the results. Students will say, oh, it was fun, but that's not good enough.

On that, do you think it helps to have the teacher's guides that the parks are providing, with pre-designed activities?

Yes, it helps to have that, along with the standards, and then of course, their textbooks. And some knowledge about history is helpful!

That's all the questions I had. Do you have anything to add, perhaps about the ELPs and how they changed your life?

They really shaped who I am and was as a teacher. I guess that's all I need to say.



Cooking at Colony Ross. Copyright 2004, Bill Lange. Used with permission.

Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them.

Put there just a spark. If there is some good flammable stuff, it will catch fire.

-Anatole France

California's Tapestry

A Section of The Catalyst

Office of Community Involvement

Issue #19 - Spring 06

Since Environmental Living Programs and Environmental Studies Programs must be nearly or completely self-supporting, they are expensive for a class to participate in. On top of the park fees, groups must factor in the costs of food, transportation, firewood, and any craft materials they need to provide.

All the state parks that have ELPs have found a way to help make it possible for lower income students to attend. Methods include providing contacts to service clubs that may help with fees, offering free firewood to some groups, offering transportation scholarships, and offering partial or full fee scholarships. State Park Guide Sara Skinner provides this example of how the Petaluma Adobe ELP increases diversity by offering scholarships.

*-Carolyn Schimandle,
Guest Editor*

At Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park, approximately one-third of the groups attending our ELPs in a school year utilize a scholarship we offer. The fees charged for the program were tripled about two years ago, and many of our groups were concerned that shrinking school field trip budgets would not allow them

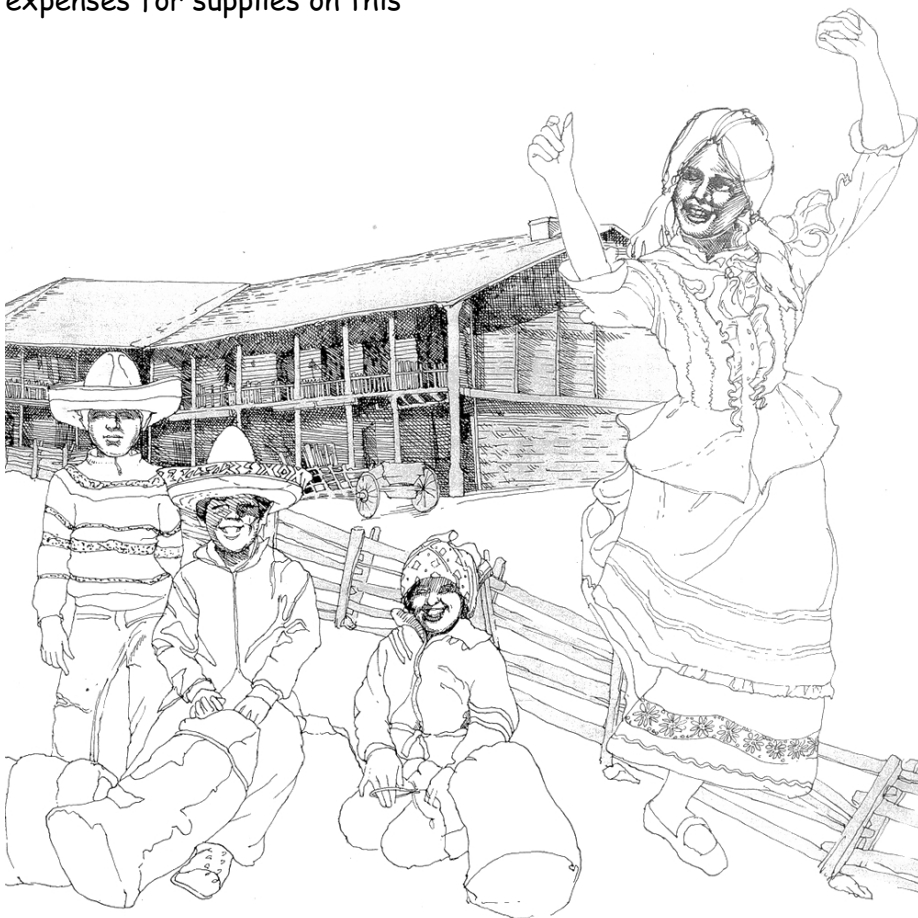
to continue participating in the program.

The scholarship program has allowed groups from schools that receive Title I money and are part of the free/reduced cost lunch program to continue to attend the ELP at our unit.

As one teacher states, "Our profit margin is very small. Most of our families work multiple jobs. With additional expenses for supplies on this

trip, [the park fee of] \$350 is a definite hardship for us. Many of our . . . kids are gaining a valuable glimpse of their priceless Mexican heritage and a greater sense of self in our changing society." This is a school where over 40% of the students receive free lunches.

We are glad that our program is reaching a diverse population, and hope that the students remember it fondly.



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